

April 3, 1974

SENATOR WALDRON: Mr. President, I move the adoption of the committee amendments. Mr. President, members of the Legislature. The committee amendments actually become the bill and the committee amendments strike all sections of the bill except Section 10. So if everyone is following this, will refer to Section 10 of the committee bill or of LB883, they will see what the bill contains at the present time. The committee struck all reference to the September primary because there was no way we could get it into operation this year hoping that future legislatures will take up this problem and solve our long election period. But we did retain the part of allowing a voter to choose either ballot or the ballot of his choice at the time he arrives at the polls and has made that offer by those people working at the polling place. That is the only thing this bill contains now is that you can choose the party's ballot of your choice when you arrive at the poll. Let me say something to those people who think this will destroy the present system. Only a short seven years ago, the State of Nebraska, in Western Nebraska, had this type of law and it's only been since I've been in the Legislature and this has been over my negative vote that we have adopted a procedure that requires people to register in the State of Nebraska and register in the party of their choice. If this Legislature wants to do something besides pass fancy sounding campaign reform laws, campaign reporting laws and one thing like that, you really want to do something to clean up politics, take the backroom politics out of it, take the minority candidates, the backroom organization and make sure the small minority control your election, you will pass this bill. This bill lets a person choose the ballot of his choice, that is, he's not going to necessarily choose the party that he has allegiance to. He's going to choose the party that has the best candidate. And that's what we should be after in our election. We should be choosing those people who have the highest qualifications. Those people who will represent the majority of the public and that's what this bill will allow us to do. Some people say it will destroy the party system in the State of Nebraska. Well, let me assure you the party system was as strong before we had our present system, six years ago, as it is today. So I think you can see that isn't true. Also, you let a person choose a ballot of his choice. You will find that the public or the parties will have to work harder to retain their membership. That is, they're going to have to sell their program to people on a continuing basis rather than say, listen, party members, we offer you these candidates. Now you choose from one of them. What they're going to have to do, they're going to say....the parties are going to say, we're going to have to work right up to the day of election to get your vote and that is going to make them work harder. That is, and then if it's shown that there's corruption in one party, instead of being locked into a party, a person wants to choose another party, when he goes to the polls, he will be able to do that. That is impossible at the present time in the State of Nebraska. That is why the Miscellaneous Subjects Committee voted and not unanimously, I might add, but voted that we should give the people of the State of Nebraska the right to choose the candidate of their choice regardless of the ballot on which his name might appear. So I ask you to look at this from a democratic point of view. And advance this bill to E & R for Review. This is one thing that will clean up politics. If we had this at the national level and every state, we wouldn't have the corruption you find in a party. You only find corruption when a small group of people can